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ABSTRACT

Current elementary music education approaches to the distribution and selection of ethnic folk song in music programs are surveyed and each approach is reviewed on the basis of its utility for the Southwest Regional Laboratory Music Program. The first approach, a traditional point of view, is based on the premise that music education has a responsibility to introduce the child to a wide spectrum of music from all cultures. A problem with this approach is that ethnic groups and their music have not received much emphasis--the emphasis, instead, is on White music. Another approach is the non-Western. This music philosophy shifts the emphasis so that children will be exposed to a variegated selection of music of other cultures; however, most classroom teachers are not prepared to teach non-Western music. In addition, there is a degree of uncertainty that young children can cope with the demands of non-Western music systems and languages. Another point of view is the Ethnic-American in which the emphasis has been on a larger representation of American ethnic music other than traditional Anglo-American repertoire. The last point of view presented is the multi-directional ethnic American that conceptualizes the relationship of a child to his society. This philosophy stresses that the American child should first discover the relevant musical diversity within his own culture before studying music of non-American cultures. A reference section concludes the document. (Author/JR)

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SWRL MUSIC PROGRAM: ETHNIC SONG SELECTION AND DISTRIBUTION

David Brian Williams

One aspect to be considered in the development of a music program is the inclusion and use of ethnic music. It is the intent of this report to examine those educational points of view and trends which speak to this aspect and to provide criteria for the selection and use of ethnic songs to be utilized in lesson writing. Design features, specified objectives, and certain program assumptions define the context for song selection and should be explicated prior to discussing an approach to the selection of ethnic music.

Context

Any approach which is adopted must fit within the scope of a music program designed for general distribution. As expressed in the general program design (Piper and Galvan, 1970), the SWRL Music Program is "intended for use with any average child in the elementary classroom." This implies use with children from any position within the spectrum of cultural diversities in our American society.

The SWRL Music Program is concept-oriented. Thus, songs utilized in the program serve primarily as vehicles for furthering an understanding of the desired musical concepts. The acquisition of a concept of ethnic consciousness is not a current music program objective.

Due to the complications inherent in the use of copyrighted materials, the population from which songs for the program can be selected is limited

to those in the public domain. Since folk song literature[1] provides the main source of music in the public domain and presents the most viable musical form to communicate ethnic mores, the extent of song selection for the program is best limited to folk music.

A final consideration is the degree to which authenticity of performance is possible within the constraints, physical and practical, of the SWRL Music Program. Ideally, an ethnic music performance should be a perfect copy. However, as Eddins (1969) discovered with performance of Indian music at the Berkshire Seminars in 1968, the "subtleties and complexities of their [Indian] music could not be acquired without long years of study." The question is raised: Should a child be deprived of the experience of the music of another culture merely because there are practical limitations on authentic performance? Kauffman (1970), a noted ethnomusicologist, contends that the problem of authenticity should not deter educators. He argues,

> that in studying the language of other peoples, we will never be able to speak without an accent, but this does not keep us from studying another language. And the same should be true in studying a musical system from another culture. Even if such music is not going to be performed exactly as it is performed by the people who have grown up with that culture, but rather in terms of understanding the people and understanding the music, we should still attempt it.

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[1] As defined by Kreibel (1962), folk song literature is music which "has come into existence without the influence of conscious art, as a spontaneous utterance, filled with characteristic expression of the feelings of a people," and by Apel (1962) as the "musical repertory and tradition of communities, as opposed to art music which is the artistic expression of musically trained individuals."

Nevertheless, even though authentic performance is not usually possible, if music education is to employ ethnic music, it must accept responsibility for the degree of authenticity reasonably possible within the confines of the education program.

Point of View: Traditional

Few educators will disagree with the basic education premise that music education has a responsibility to introduce the child to a wide spectrum of music from all cultures. The California State Department of Education's Music Framework (1971) specifies as a purpose of music education the promotion of an "awareness and understanding of music literature of various periods and of the forms, styles, and idioms that are characteristic of various national cultures, including our own" (author's underscore).

The locus of the problem lies in the lack of a prescribed method of achieving this necessary "awareness" of the music literature of national cultures and the absence of a definition of a balanced representation. In most attempts at providing music of "various national cultures," i.e., standard elementary school music series, the result is most often an arbitrary potpourri of song selections. The usual traditional elementary music text consists of predominately Western European music, some patriotic-historic Anglo-American songs, some Black spirituals, and a small sample of other miscellaneous ethnic representations.

A perusal of recent issues of the Music Educators Journal will reveal the general lack of satisfaction on the part of music educators with this traditional approach to the problem, and further serves to indicate a need for recognition and representation of ethnic groups and

their music other than the White music which has received the major emphasis in the past.

Point of View: Non-Western

Under the influence of substantial research by an increasing number of ethnomusicologists, there would appear to be a major shift in emphasis to non-Western cultures in music education methodology today. For many music educators, this shift in emphasis means a multi-directional non-Western approach founded on the feeling that children ought to be exposed to a variegated selection of music of other cultures. As Trimillos (1972) of the University of Hawaii commented at the 1972 MENC National Convention, "the use of ethnic music in eudcation acknowledges the possibility and validity of alternatives in the educational process; the choice can include literally the entire world."

On the other hand, some educators contend that the approach should be a uni-directional non-Western one, concentrating on a few specific non-Western cultures. Thus, the child would receive complete cultural saturation in one or two specific ethnic groups. Mantle Hood claims that through early constant exposure to the music of a non-Western culture, a child will "gain a feeling for the music of a non-Western culture through depth experience in the music of one culture rather than a superficial experience in the music of many cultures."

In 1960, Hood implemented a program of instruction at Will Rogers School, Los Angeles, to examine the use of Javanese music as the primary material for music instruction with children. Hood found the experiment "extremely encouraging."

> Both classes had achieved a high degree of proficiency in singing skills . . . . The advantages of such a program were manifold, and the experiment was leemed a success. Because all instruction was given through rote learning according to the native Javenese tradition, the students developed increased aural sensitivity. Their memories improved. The children's sense of pitch discrimination was sharpened as they were forced to distinguish scale degrees of unfamiliar intervals.

Hood suggested that the SWRL Music Program be solely devoted to the music of Java and the Ewe of West Africa. This approach appears overly limited in scope and would "ignore the world of Western music." The validity of his theory that the use of Javenese, or other non-Western music, would more greatly enhance pitch sensitivity than would Western Music is also questionable. It was also noted that Hood's program was conducted by natives of Java, guaranteeing a measure of authenticity not available in normal public school operation. Nor is there general agreement that "knowing a great deal about one musical tradition is better than knowing a little about several."

Anderson (1970) examined the implementation of the music of Java and India in the sixth grade as a mode of teaching the basic concepts of music. There appeared to be a general acceptance of the music but Anderson reported that "students who have difficulty in singing Western songs also experience similar problems with foreign songs." Further problems were encountered with the range demands on changing male voices and with pronunciation of non-English languages.

There is little question that the uni-directional non-Western approach does offer a much needed, systematic design for the inclusion of an element of non-Western music in the music curriculum. Additionally,

it provides an alternative to the traditional or the multi-directional non-Western approach. However, there are three major drawbacks to a total commitment to the uni-directional non-Western approach. The desirability of a total commitment to one or two specific non-Western cultures is questionable. There is a considerable degree of uncertainty which exists as to the ability of the young child to cope with the demands of non-Western music systems and languages and, the general classroom teacher is not prepared to teach non-Western music.

Point of View: Ethnic-American

Parallel to the emphasis in music education on music from non-Western sources has been an emphasis (perhaps better labeled a plea) for more representation of American ethnic music other than the traditional Anglo-American repertoire. Demands for relevancy in music education for all American ethnics, especially from the Black, Indian, and Mexican-American contingents of American society, have accompanied national demands for recognition and equality in all facets of life.

Several music programs have been tailored to meet the needs of one particular American ethnic group. Of these, programs utilizing Afro-American and African music have been the most prominent. Examples of uni-directional American ethnic approaches which have demonstrated a degree of success in dealing with "relevancy" to a specific ethnic populace are Reeder's (1970) use of African music for Black children in general music programs, Deal's (Stoll, 1971) African dance and music program for Black ghetto children at the New Thing Art and Architecture Center, Washington, D.C., and Ballard's (1970) program utilizing American

Indian music at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. It is apparent that, for the focus for which they are intended, music programs oriented to a specific ethnic group are successful, at least in terms of immediate motivational return.

At this point, however, it is essential to take an inventory of priorities. Music educators have made explicit the necessity for (1) representation of non-Western music, (2) musical "relevance" to ethnic American contingents, and (3) understanding of the entire cultural spectrum of music. If an approach were to synthesize these priorities and prescribe a systematic means for implementation, such a design would offer a rather unique educational scheme for dealing with song repertoire and ethnic consciousness in the elementary music program.

Points of View: Multi-Directional Ethnic American

Gordon (1969) has proposed a multi-dimensional framework for conceptualizing the relationship of a child to his society. Gordon's framework indicates a child's position as a linear social function from near to far: co-resident, co-ethnic, co-community, co-nation, co-world, and finally, co-humanity. From this schemata, it can be seen that Gordon feels that the eudcational development of a child should progress in ever widening circles to establish a relevance to humanity as the end result. But, the implication is that in order to arrive at the end result, it is essential to establish a relevance to each co-relationship in a child's society. This would mean that if a child is to establish relevance to the world's music, he must first establish relevance to his own co-ethnic, and consequently his co-national music. Nketia (1967),

in substantiating a "co-nation" educational philosophy for the music program in his native Africa, maintained that musical experience provided in music education "should not only satisfy the criterion of good music, it should also be relevant, meaningful, and significant in the society to which the school child belongs."

In writing in the Music Educators Journal (1970), Nketia elaborated his position:

> Our task as educators, therefore, is . . . to contribute to the development of the personality of the child who lives his life both as an individual and as a member of social groups. When the sociomusical development of the child is also our concern, we ensure that every child develops not only musical responsiveness, understanding and aesthetic sensitivity, but also a critical awareness of the complex of values in terms of which music is practiced in his society. (author's underscore)

Although not speaking directly to elementary music education, Reimer (1970) is of the opinion that music "education can and should have common aims for all children while at the same time not ignoring -- in fact, enjoying and encouraging -- the existence of a rich variety of music flavors in American culture." In other words, music education must instill in the young American[2] child an awareness of the wide spectrum of music (co-ethnic) present in his American society (co-nation). This spectrum is not the heretofore limited Anglo-American image of American culture, but one which represents the breadth of American heritage encompassing the ethnic domains of Black, Hispanic, Indian, and Anglo-American peoples as well as those of Oriental, Polynesian, Eskimo, and many others. The Black-American composer, William Grant Still (1970)

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2 The term "American" is used in this context as a generic label for a person residing in the United States of America.

quite aptly places the Afro-American into this perspective of co-ethnic, co-nation:

> For a long time we Afro-Americans needed something like the fact that Black can be beautiful to give us identity and pride in our racial heritage. Now that has been accomplished. Most of us come to realize that Black is indeed beautiful, but only as White, Brown, or Yellow is beautiful: when we make it so. The term has served its purpose, so I hope from this time forward we will all want to emphasize our American ties, as well as our African heritage.

In essence, it appears that what these educators are advocating is a multi-directional ethnic-American approach based on the philosophy that the American child should first discover the "relevant" musical diversity within his own culture - America, before those musics of non-American cultures. From a foundation of ethnic consciousness of the music of America, the child can then be led to broaden his perspectives to include music of non-American cultures (co-world), with the end result being, as Gordon's framework suggests, an understanding of co-humanity through a focus on musical expression.

A systematic program of implementation based on this philosophy would provide a structure for the previously stated priorities. Relevance is achieved by building the elementary music program music repertoire primarily from folk songs of ethnic-American origin; representation of non-American music is provided as a complement to the child's American musical heritage. The end result will be an understanding of the entire cultural spectrum of music.

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